

INFORMATION REPORT

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SUBJECT Communist Policy Toward Armed Peasantry

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1. In May and June 1949, Communist bands over-ran the northeastern portion of Kwangtung, including the hsien of Pingyuan (115-54, 24-51), Chao Ning (佳寧), Tapu (113-18, 22-28), Mei (116-13, 24-18), Hsingning (115-49, 24-04), Wuhua (115-41, 24-02).

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2. During the period of Communist control, however, notices were posted in villages ordering the people to surrender all firearms to the new Communist hsien governments within five days. The order, which affected particularly officials of the previous government, police, and all military forces, was aimed at obtaining arms for Communist forces and stripping the populace of any power to rebel.

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3. [redacted] in early July 1949, the Communists withdrew to the hills with about three thousand rifles seized from the people.

[redacted] Comment. This action is unprecedented in recent Chinese history, especially during periods of weakened governmental authority. This policy is evidence to contradict the belief held by some that the Chinese Communists rely on an armed peasantry. The policy appears to be one of stripping the peasantry of their power of resistance. Its present success is unknown, although the large number of weapons taken away by the Communists in their retreat would indicate that it has not been a total failure even if some of the peasantry managed to retain their arms.

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